

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said unto him, I have no husband: Jesus saith unto her, Thou saidst well, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this hast thou said truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.

22 Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know: for salvation is from the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (which is called Christ:) when he is come, he will declare unto us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

Lesson Links

After Christ's talk with Nicodemus, he and his disciples went from Jerusalem into the country of Judea, probably north of Jerusalem, and Jesus allowed his disciples to baptize.

It seems that he must have drawn large crowds to his baptism, for "the Pharisee had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John." John the Baptist was also continuing his work near Enon, a place probably not far from Sychar, the scene of today's lesson. When Jesus heard that the Pharisee had got this report, he at once left for Galilee. We know not why. Probably, because of the insidious comparison which the Pharisee made of his success with John's. Or, probably, because Jesus knew that the Pharisees were anxious to overwhelm John and that his own success only made John's fate more certain and more closely at hand. Or, as I think more probable, Jesus knew that both John and himself were opposed by the Jews of Jerusalem and that they were uniting to end the careers of both John and himself, and that he could better do his work in Galilee, which was not so bitterly Jewish. However, it was, he went and had to pass thru Samaria for some untold reason. It was the more direct route but this hardly seems to explain why "he must needs pass thru Samaria." A possible

reason may be, that Herod having just cast John the Baptist into prison, Jesus went thru Samaria rather than thru Perea, the seat of Herod, for fear of personal danger at the hands of Herod.

The Lesson Interpreted

In this journey, about six o'clock, after a hard day's walk, he and the disciples came to Jacob's well, near the village of Sychar. (Locate on the map in your Bible.) Sychar is on the south-east slope of Mt. Ebal. Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim stand almost due north and south of each other, the former on the north. The road runs northwest and southeast thru the valley between them. Jacob's well was on the road, Sychar was off the road some little distance. Jesus weary with the journey sat down on the well curb, while the disciples went to the village of Sychar to buy food. And as he sat thus resting, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus asked her for a drink. It ought to cheer us in weariness and need of earthly comforts to remember that Jesus knows all about it by experience. She asked in genuine surprise, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, a Samaritan woman?" For strict Jews had no familiar dealings with the Samaritans. (How did she know he was a Jew?) And Jesus replied with the tact of a Master of men, "If you knew who it is that asks of you a drink, you would have asked of him and he would have given you living water," i. e., water not from a cistern like Jacob's well but from a spring. And here everyone who would bring souls to Christ can learn invaluable lessons in tact and method.

The woman's curiosity was aroused. She asked, "From whence hast thou the water of which you speak, since the well is deep and you have nothing with which to draw? Are you greater than Jacob who made this well?" Jesus was not yet ready to tell her of his real personality. And the woman was not yet prepared. She was curious to know what he meant, yet did not believe what he said. Jesus turns the subject from himself to the water. Blessed is the disciple who does likewise! Jesus resumed, "He that drinks of this water shall become thirsty again after a time; but he that drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but instead, it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This water does not satisfy. That which I give, does two things: 1, it satisfies; 2, it flows out to others that they also may drink.

Here we have a most beautiful setting forth of what salvation should do in the case of every one who receives it.

Too many think that its purpose is only to satisfy the soul's hunger for God. This is its first purpose. But Jesus declares that it must also be a well of water flowing out unselfishly to others. Woe, to those who treasure up their salvation for themselves alone! It must flow out to others, else it spoils. Flowing water is sweet. Stagnant

water becomes a poison. May not this beautiful saying of Jesus explain the reason of some backsliding and of some barrenness in Christian's lives? The woman still ignorant of what the Master was trying to teach her, but curious to know what he meant said, "Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw." This was the point to which Jesus had been tending, to get the woman to ask for it. For it is after all only those who ask that receive, not those who argue, or question, or dispute. But when the woman asked for this living water, tho she did not fully understand it, then Jesus opened the way for the granting of her request. He would now see whether she really wanted what he had to give her. And so he said, "Go, call your husband and come hither." Ah, how her eyes must have looked up to him in fright and then have fallen with the sense of guilt and shame! Jesus never cures a sin sick soul without going to the seat of the disease. Sin must be unveiled and seen in all its naked ugliness before it will be hated and forsaken. The woman replied, "I have no husband." Then Jesus pressing home the significance of this fact said, "You say truly that you have no husband, for you have had five husbands and he whom you now have is not your husband; you spoke truly." The thrust was well aimed and struck home. And the woman's heart must have grieved at the keenness of this man's insight. And with surprise and perhaps a touch of flattery, she replied, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." And then turning the subject from one so personal and withal so painful in the presence of this strange, prophetic Man, she said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," pointing up to Mt. Gerizim, on whose top lay the ruins of the Samaritan temple, destroyed in B. C. 130 by John Hyrcanus, the Maccabee. "And ye, (Jews) say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." This woman illustrates the characteristic of human nature, which seeks to supplant personal application of the Gospel to one's needy self, by an argument on the speculations of religion. Some people can discourse eloquently on the theories of religion who are dumb when it comes to personal experience. But Jesus was not to be turned from his purpose. "Woman, believe me, the hour comes, when neither in Mt. Gerizim nor yet in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father. Ye (Samaritans) worship that which ye know not; we (Jews) worship that which we know; for salvation is from out the Jews." The Samaritans had no Messiah from David as to the flesh in their religion, hence Christ's words. And then Jesus casting his eyes down the years continued, "But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father, not in temples as is now required, but in spirit and in truth; for such (not those who worship with external trappings only) doth the Father seek to be his worshippers." We today can learn from these blessed words. And then he declared,